5-1-1994

A view from within: Ruth Dealy's real-life portraits

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A view from within

Ruth Dealy's real-life portraits

by Bill Rodriguez

Standing in the middle of her light-filled studio, Ruth Dealy, a woman in her 70s with a warm smile and gentle manner, points to the canvas that she was working on last week, the piece that has been her focus for the past few months. She notes, "I found myself drawn to it, almost as if it was waiting for me."

Dealy, who was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and spent much of the past three years on the fund-raising committee for the Providence Art Club's annual exhibition, "Sleeping with the Fishes," has always been deeply connected to the artistic community of Rhode Island. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions and has received widespread critical acclaim.

When asked about the inspiration behind her latest piece, Dealy responds with a smile, "It's a reflection of my own life. I often find myself drawn to themes of loss and renewal, of the passage of time and the ways in which it shapes us."

The piece in question is a study of a cherub, painted in deep reds and blues, with delicate brushstrokes that evoke a sense of both innocence and the pain of childhood. Dealy, who is known for her ability to capture the essence of her subjects, has been particularly drawn to the figure of the cherub in recent years, finding in it a symbol of the vulnerability and innocence of youth.

"I see these little angels as a metaphor for the very essence of being human," she says. "They are pure and untainted, without the baggage of experience and the weight of the world on their shoulders."

Dealy's work often explores the themes of identity, memory, and the passage of time, as seen in her previous piece, "The Morning After," which was a study of a woman seated at a table, lost in thought. This piece, like many of Dealy's work, is a meditation on the transience of life and the enduring nature of the human experience.

"Art is a way of making sense of the world," Dealy says. "It's a tool for understanding ourselves and each other, for tapping into the universal experiences that we all share."

Despite the challenges of the past few years, Dealy remains committed to her craft, finding solace in the creative process and the connections it fosters. "I feel a real sense of purpose when I'm working on a piece," she says. "It's a way of expressing myself and connecting with others in a deep, meaningful way."

Dealy's latest piece, currently in progress, is a study of a child, with delicate brushstrokes that evoke the innocence of childhood. "I'm drawn to the idea of capturing the essence of a child's spirit," she says. "I want to convey a sense of wonder and the pure joy of being alive."